



# 2006 Session Review

## Bill Hinkle 13th District State Representative



### Serving citizens in:

- Kittitas
- Yakima and
- Grant counties

### Committees:

- Health Care  
*(Ranking Republican)*
- Children and Family Services
- Appropriations

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Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in the House of Representatives. This was a short-session year and the Democrat-controlled Legislature left Olympia one day early in March, but not before passing the largest spending increase in state history.

You may have heard me on the radio in our district or saw me quoted in the newspapers about how shocked I was at the operating budget presented to us by the majority party. The budget increased spending 17.7 percent over the last biennium. House Democrats proposed \$468 million in NEW spending that wasn't in the original 2005-07 budget. They did all this in a supplemental budget year.

I voted against this budget because I believe it is an irresponsible use of taxpayer money. Economists predict that the state would have had a budget surplus of \$1.6 billion by the end of 2007. I was pushing the majority to put some of this money away for a rainy day, but they resisted creating such a fund. More detail inside on the budget.

I was also pushing for true health care reform and most of the legislation I sponsored was set aside for Democrat-sponsored bills. I'll give you a full report inside.

I hope to see many of you around the district this spring and summer, and I look forward to hearing your views about what happened in Olympia this session. I've got a series of district days planned. Look inside for specific dates, locations and times.

Warmest regards,

Rep. Bill Hinkle

# Representative **Bill Hinkle** • **13th District**

## **A shocking state budget**

I was absolutely shocked that the Democrat-controlled Legislature would present a budget that was the largest spending increase in state history.

This supplemental budget increased spending from the last biennium by 17.7 percent. This overspending is going to push the budget into the red even if revenue growth stays steady at 10 percent per biennium.

I told you in the last news-letter that state economists predicted extra state revenue to the tune of \$1.6 billion. I worked hard this session to get the majority to put some of this money away into a

rainy-day fund. I want to save this money for any economic downturns that could befall us in the years ahead. But my efforts were thwarted by the Democrat-controlled House. The majority went on to spend an additional \$1.3 billion, more than even the governor was asking for, including \$468 million in new spending.

Not only did the majority want to spend nearly the entire budget surplus, but they tried to tell you that they were putting money into savings accounts. They claimed to be putting \$825 million away into special accounts that were earmarked for specific purposes, like the state pension account. I want to tell you that these accounts are not savings, they are merely deferred spending waiting to be spent at some time in the future.

The majority also increased the voter-approved spending limit to allow for this runaway spending. I'll continue to work next session to bring spending under control and

to create a constitutional rainy-day fund that would require a three-fifths vote in both chambers in order to spend the reserve.

## **Affordable and accessible health care**



I used my role as ranking Republican on the House Health Care Committee to lead the charge for true health care reform. Yet I knew it was going to be a challenge to meet citizens' needs for flexible, affordable and tailored health insurance plans. I joined House and Senate Republicans in the "Commitment to Washington" that called for giving health care back to patients by returning competition to the health care marketplace in order to lower the costs of insurance.



We had some successes and some failures in bringing true health care reform to Washington state.

Democrats passed legislation to expand government-controlled health care and attempted to pass legislation to increase costly mandates and regulations against private health insurance carriers. Fortunately, the Democrats weren't able to pass all their proposed legislation or they would have completely destroyed the health insurance industry in our state.



I tried to stop the health care train from running off the tracks by supporting the only health care bill (HB 1383) that became law this session that

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should save the state money. Health savings accounts will soon be available as a health benefit option for public employees, and they are projected to save the state between \$3 - \$20 million per year, depending upon how many people open them.

I believe that a private, consumer-driven system is the best way to provide more choices, higher quality services and more affordable health insurance. Republican proposals would have increased health care options in the private marketplace and provided more individual choice and responsibility through such innovations as health savings accounts. I also supported legislation to bring consumer-driven reforms into the state's Medicaid and Basic Health Plans.

I supported House Bill 2728 to provide a B&O tax deduction for small businesses who provide health care for their employees. Not only would this encourage small businesses who don't currently provide health insurance to begin providing it, but it would also permit many small businesses who are at the breaking point of having to drop their health insurance to continue to provide health insurance for their employees. This bill didn't make it out of the House Finance Committee.

Although the Democrat-controlled Legislature failed to pass any meaningful legislation to address rising health care insurance costs, Republicans and Democrats did join together to support House Bill 2972, which will allow health carriers to offer a health benefit plan to groups of 500 or more individuals in the same industry (i.e. purchasing pools). These plans would also permit contributions from more than one employer. This legislation passed both the House and Senate unanimously.

## Columbia River basin water agreement



House Republicans brokered a landmark deal this year in HB 2860, the Columbia River basin water resource management bill. This bill allocates \$200 million for funding of storage projects, ensures that there will be enough water in streams for fish during the peak draw down times, and allows voluntary regional agreements aimed at ensuring ac-

cess to full water rights.

I fully supported this legislation that was a compromise between the Department of Ecology, the governor's office and lawmakers from both the House and Senate. I commend our caucus members Rep. Bruce Chandler of Granger and Rep. Dan Newhouse of Sunnyside for getting this landmark legislation written and passed.



## Money for local projects

The state capital budget contained money for 13th District projects:

The budget includes \$2.5 million for new infrastructure at the Port of Warden to support the development of a bio-fuel production plant. The largest share for the 13th District, \$3.65 million, is directed for a public works trust fund loan to provide sewer system improvements for Terrace Heights near Yakima. Central Washington University is listed to receive \$1.8 million for replacement of its air conditioning system. For Skookumchuck Creek habitat preservation, \$800,000 has been appropriated.

The budget also included \$400,000 for extension of utilities at the Port of Quincy to support new operations by Microsoft, Yahoo and other computer-related companies.

## Accessing Olympia through the Web

- **Leg.wa.gov** – Find committee meeting schedules and other information about the Legislature.
- **Access.wa.gov** – Access state agencies, apply for unemployment benefits, find lists of local events and festivals, renew your car tabs, and more.
- **SBA.gov and/or WSBDC.org** – Need help starting or operating a small business? You'll find it here.

# Representative **Bill Hinkle** • **13th District**

## District Days

This table below shows a list of dates, locations, and times for the **13th District Days** schedule throughout the area. Dates after June will be posted on my legislative website <http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/hinkle.htm>

<b>Date</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Time</b>
April 19th	Ephrata	Rock Park Coffee	26 Basin Street NW	10am - 2pm
May 3rd	Quincy	Mayor Zimbelman's House	904 - 4th Ave SE	10am - 2pm
May 10th	Moses Lake	Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce	324 Pioneer Way	10am - 2pm
May 17th	Mattawa/Desert Aire	Sand Trap Restaurant	124 Frontier Way W	10am - noon
May 17th	Royal City	Dave's Restaurant	125 Camelia St.	1pm - 3pm
May 24th	Moses Lake	Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce	324 Pioneer Way	10am - noon
May 24th	Warden	Porter's Place	103 S. Main St.	2pm - 4pm
May 31st	Ellensburg	D&M Coffee Co.	301 N. Pine St.	10am - 2pm
June 7th	Moses Lake	Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce	324 Pioneer Way	10am - 2pm
June 14th	Yakima	Yakima Chamber of Commerce	10 N. 9th St.	10am - 2pm
June 21st	Moses Lake	Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce	324 Pioneer Way	10am - noon
June 21st	George	Martha's Inn	600 Frontage Road	1pm - 3pm

I will be getting around the district to meet with you. These are the dates I will be available in your town. Please call my Olympia office at (360) 786-7808 if you would like to reserve a 15-minute slot during these visits. Or please just stop by to visit.

I am available to meet in Kittitas County on additional days because I live in Cle Elum and work throughout the county. Please call my Olympia office at (360) 786-7808 if you would like to set up a date and time to meet for a cup of coffee.

Remember, you can contact me anytime by e-mail at: [Hinkle.Bill@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Hinkle.Bill@leg.wa.gov). I want to hear from you.

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